14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

873 program off to a good start the services of an expert or a small mission should be requested from UNESCO which has accumulated considerable experience in techniques of fundamental education and which was active in Syria during 1952 and 1953 in the field of vocational training.

Higher Education

Higher education has made substantial progress. The Syrian University, which started in 1919 with schools of medicine and law, now includes also faculties of letters and of sciences, schools of pharmacy, dentistry and engineering and a Higher Teachers' Training College. In 1952-53 the University had 2,580 students. In Aleppo a school of engineering has also been established. Yet a further expansion and improvement of facilities will undoubtedly be necessary since the development program will sharply increase the demand for well-trained teachers, doctors, engineers, civil servants and other qualified personnel. The University will need more teachers, equipment, laboratories and libraries. Although many Syrians will inevitably have to go abroad for special types of training, Syria should be able gradually to provide broader opportunities for higher education at home. The mission suggests that the government appoint a special committee to draw up recommendations for improving and expanding the University in line with the requirements of the economic development program that might be adopted. Such recommendations will undoubtedly entail larger expenditures on higher education, which the mission has taken into account.

658 871 *School Building*

In recent years Syria has apparently been spending about £S 2.5 million annually on new schools. Of this amount, approximately £S 1.4 million has come from municipal or local funds. We do not think that the government should spend, on the average, more than this for school building over the next six years. More could be achieved with such an expenditure, however, by economizing on the cost of construction and requiring more local self-help. Secondary schools built by the Ministry of Public Works, for example, have been excessively expensive owing to their monumental character, the use of costly building materials such as carved stone and other features of a luxury nature. The past cost of £S 150-200 per

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Miscellaneous Buildings

653 [341] There are, of course, various other types of public and special-purpose buildings with which the government is concerned. Among these are agricultural structures, workshops, museums, monuments and resthouses, to whatever extent they are not privately financed. The mission has made suitable allowances for these in the six-year program, under the appropriate headings elsewhere in this report.

[341] Although they are financed and constructed entirely by private endeavor, the religious buildings deserve special mention. This is a field in which Syria excels. Some of the mosques, minarets and churches, whether in large towns or small villages, are outstanding illustrations of the way in which architectural design and construction can be adapted to the needs of the people, their economic resources, and the materials and skills available locally.

657 ## VII COST OF PROPOSED SETTLEMENTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM

Table 5 summarizes the mission's proposed six-year program in the field of settlements and social services.

TABLE 5 Proposed Six-Year Program for Settlements and Social Services Financed by the Public Sector (*Thousand £S*)

Sector	Total	Annual average
Housing	28,076	4,679
Education	271,780	45,297
Public health	74,150	12,358
Social welfare	450	75
Community development	2,687	448
Buildings for other purposes	8,500	1,417
Community services	86,000	14,333
Planning—Administration	3,600	600
Total	475,243	79,207
Share of		
Central government	372,643	62,107
Municipalities	102,600	17,100

361 broken up by the formation of new districts, often at some dis-
175 tance from the original town centre. In isolated parts and on the slopes of the mountain, where nature is conducive to prayer and meditation, many convents and madrasahs were erected; although several of these have been destroyed and others are disused and in ruins, about fifty have survived until the present time, while others again have been converted and incorporated in more recent buildings.

361 In the Moslem sector of the old town is the Maristan of
344 Nur ad-Din, "one of the most famous hospitals of the Moslem
172 world". It is of great architectural interest, but is unfortunately spoilt by the modern buildings which now surround it. The doorway has a rich and original alveolate decoration, a classical pediment and a beautiful pair of doors. Over the entrance hall is a small ribbed onion dome, surmounted by a sort of truncated conical drum, made up of superimposed alveoles which are visible even from the outside, as in the case of the brick tomb of Zobeide near Baghdad. In the courtyard, with its two beautiful iwans (halls), fragments of inscriptions, lattice-work and marble inlay have been preserved.

361 The Nuriya Madrasah, to the south of the Great Mosque,
346 has a similar dome above the mausoleum. Its doorway is
172 distinguished by the pendant keystone motif, also to be seen at the Adiliya Madrasah, a "masterpiece of stereotomy and bonding" planned and constructed in the architectural style and by the methods characteristic of northern Syria. This latter madrasah, a fitting building for the headquarters of the Arab Academy, has been very carefully restored and rearranged. This building, together with the Zahiriya Madrasah (now the National Library), the house of Saladin's father, which was converted by the Sultan Beibars into a memorial college, and the Aziziya Madrasah (Saladin's tomb) form a fine architectural group to the north of the Great Mosque; these buildings are still adorned by a wealth of ancient works of art, inscriptions, mosaics, doors and windows.

The twofold influence of Mesopotamia and northern Syria can be seen in the art of the period of Nur ad-Din and Saladin.

Various mausolea are to be found outside the old town itself and slightly to the north, in the area between the river and the modern thoroughfare called Baghdad Street. That of Zayn ad-Din (Sitt ech-Cham, 1172), is the oldest example of such a building with a sepulchral dome surmounting two drums; the "Sultan Hasan" Mausoleum has a ribbed dome and an interesting decoration of stucco and painting; the Chamiya Madrasah, standing outside the city walls, contains one of the finest examples of plaster moulding in Damascus, beautiful inscriptions and the armatures of the old leaded-glass windows. The Mausoleum of Ibn al-Moqaddam, Emir of Aleppo, is a typical north Syrian structure. Further to the east and of more recent date stands the At-Tawba Mosque, planned and arranged on the same lines as the Omayyad Mosque, and interesting on account of its architecture and decoration (doorway, mihrab, leaded-glass windows, etc.).

The suburb of Salihiyah grew up on the mountain side round a fine group of mausolea, madrasahs and convents, most of which are now abandoned or used for somewhat unsuitable purposes. There, in a picturesque spot on the Nahr Yazid, we find the remains of a colonnaded portico of the oldest convent-madrasah of Salihiyah, together with a whole series of monuments built by eminent persons at the court of Nur ad-Din and Saladin. Most of them are mausolea with brick domes, some ribbed and others double, surmounting two drums decorated with arcading and lobate or twin niches. Many of them contain beautiful carved wooden tombs, old leaded-glass windows and

361 lintels decorated with graceful inscriptions and coats of arms.
346 The Mouaffari Mosque, built in 1202, is decorated in a par-
172 ticularly interesting and original manner; it is the oldest Ayyubid Mosque, and its plan is reminiscent of the Omayyad Mosque. Ancient columns, with their capitals, have been used to form the arcades round the courtyard. The carved wooden lintels (with incised geometrical designs) over the seven doors of the prayer hall are well preserved; two of them are still surmounted by plaster lattice-work. Inside, several windows have beautiful old glass panes.

Also worthy of mention is the Atabakiya Madrasah, built to house the tomb of Princess Tarkan-Khatoun, with its fine doorway decorated with alveoles, which today, owing to the concealment of the corner colums by more recent structures, looks as if it were in recess. The arrangement of the alveoles, the bonding of the arch-stones of the arcade and the modelling of the cornices show originality, but are somewhat primitive.

This part of the town subsequently developed and spread very considerably, taking in neighbouring districts such as the Kurd quarter, in Saladin's time, and the Mohadjirine at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, this suburb centres round the Mohiy ad-Din Mosque, built by Sultan Selim in 1518 over the tomb of the famous mystic. This mosque, which also contains the tomb of Abd el-Kader, has a beautiful minaret and very striking faience decorations.

MAMELUKE PERIOD

361 At the beginning of the Mameluke period, Damascus developed
195 and expanded further; its products were highly esteemed and, in order to meet the demands of the time, the city developed its art industries, specializing in luxury articles. Even the Crusades promoted its commercial relations with the Western world; like Aleppo, Damascus traded with southern France, Genoa, Pisa and Venice. Its artistic products, such as silks, bronze ornaments, Damascene blades, enamel-work and glassware were in demand everywhere. As a result of this commercial activity, its suqs spread to the north of the Citadel, in the horse-market area, where the Yelbogha Mosque was built in 1264.

Following the example of the Sultans of Cairo, governors, military leaders and their servants then built a great many madrasahs (schools for the teaching of the Koran) and mausolea. The favourite sites for the latter were along the road to Mecca "so that the founder might benefit from the prayers of passing pilgrims". Thus a new suburb, called the meidan, sprang up along this road, reflecting the special features of the pilgrim traffic and trade. The meidan, about two miles in length, was linked with the city by a new group of suqs (Es-Sinaniyeh) outside the western gate of the wall, between the districts of Chagur and Qasr el-Hajjaj; it absorbed the suburban village of El-Qbeybat ("little domes"), and ended at Bab-Allah (Allah's Gate), whence pilgrims "set out on their journey to the Holy House of God".

361 It would take too long to give a complete list of the Mame-
346 luke monuments existing in these districts; even the directory
172 of the Antiquities Service does not include them all. Very often a minaret, a fountain or a madrasah, although not classified, is of considerable interest, because it adds to the atmosphere of the place, or because it has certain original features, though these are often not very obvious, owing to the conversion of the building for another purpose or to bad restoration.

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Here, we shall mention only a few monuments which are particularly unusual or significant. Such, for example, is the Turba Afridouniya ("Jami el-Ajami"), at the city end of the meidan, a Koranic school and mausoleum commemorating the Persian trader, Afridun, who died in 1348. The composition of its façade, with black and white courses of masonry, is perfect, and all the decorative elements hit in harmoniously with it. There are a great many of the latter (cornices, bull's eye windows, doorway with inlaid work and scallops, stalactite ornamentation, inscriptions, interlocking voussoirs and panels of strapwork), and several of them were subsequently repeated, for purely ornamental purposes, in other buildings.

A little further south, there is a small mausoleum to an unknown person, which is commonly called "Weli Cheyhani". Its architecture is sober and its composition good. As in the majority of these monuments, the façade, with its skilful bonding, has a doorway decorated with alveoles. The two windows are connected by a single lintel, composed of three rows of stones, the middle one being formed of interlocking voussoirs; there is a bull's eye above the pilaster separating them. The dome, resting on a high drum with 16 windows, is pierced with holes to let in light.

Nearly half-way along the meidan stands the double mausoleum of Araq, belonging to the same period (1349). The plan of this building is more complicated. Its many-coloured façade has turquoise-blue faience inlay round the doorway, with its ornamentation of stalactites and braid-moulding. Here also, the sloping surfaces are gracefully joined to the vertical by a system of alveoles, and the long fascia of the lintels divides the façade horizontally with its two-coloured arrangement of interlocking voussoirs, repeated right across the building and sloping first one way and then the other. The many radiating voussoirs of the bull's eyes form as it were the rays of a sunburst. The lintels are enriched with geometrical and floral designs, and cyma reversa mouldings give unity to the various parts of the façade.

The architectural and decorative elements used with a very strong sense of balance and harmony in these buildings, were later repeated and multiplied until surfaces became so richly adorned as to give the impression of incoherence and pointlessness, combined with artistic decadence, which is characteristic of the last Mameluke period.

The Yachbak Mausoleum (1377), more ornate, but still well designed and balanced, has domes surmounting sloping roofs composed of alveoles. The central feature of the façade is a doorway decorated with stalactites, and the rosettes of the bull's eyes form a horizontal band, matched, within the embrasure of the doorway, by a panel decorated with marble and faience inlaid work in an interlaced design, surrounding the Mameluke coat of arms.

The same features are to be seen in the Rachidiyé Madrasah, the upper part of whose doorway has recently been cut off to make room for an entirely extraneous small structure; the fine composition of the façade is also partially concealed by modern buildings.

Among the latest buildings of the Mameluke period, the Sabuniya Madrasah, the Sibaiya Madrasah at the western end of the "Street called Straight", and the Al-Muradiya Madrasah deserve mention. Prominently situated, with the curves of their domes and the tall shafts of their beautiful minarets, they add a special and typical note of their own to the street scene.

A few other monuments of the same period are to be found either in the old town or in the districts immediately to the north of it. We have already mentioned the Yelbogha Mosque,

designed on the same lines as the Omayyad Mosque; it is remarkable for the beautiful structure of its niches and windows with their alveolate decoration, its magnificent bands of plaster moulding, and its windows, doorways and minaret. This mosque well deserves to be set off to greater advantage.

Tingiz, the Viceroy of Syria, was responsible for the construction of a fine group of buildings. Only the beautiful minaret and two doorways of the mosque which bears his name still remain after the rebuilding of the An-Nasar Avenue, but the double mausoleum of his w[illegible] (Turba Kukabaiya) and, a little further on, the Dar al-Hadir, a school where the traditions of the Prophet were expounded, are still to be seen in the "Street called Straight".

The last monuments of this period are the two beautiful tiered minarets in the Bab Jabiya suq, with their rich decoration, and that of the Al-Moallaq Mosque, with an unbroken line of black stones encircling its niches and rose windows.

OTTOMAN PERIOD

The end of the Mameluke period was marked by a serious economic crisis, aggravated by disturbances and devastation (Tamerlane), and also by the Portuguese discoveries, which altered the traditional trade routes. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which expanded Damascus's economic and political frontiers, the city again began to develop. Under the capitulations, Turkish ports were opened to European merchants. Moreover, since pilgrims set out from Damascus on their journey to Mecca, the city was expected to supply them with the necessary equipment and provisions for their crossing of the desert.

These circumstances led to the building of many khans, with their porticoed courtyards, shops and stables on the ground floor and accommodation for travellers on the floor above. The city was no longer of any strategic or military importance; the ramparts, already useless on account of the town's extension and the formation of suburbs without the walls, were abandoned; the moats filled in and the Citadel fell into ruins. The pasha (governor), with his entourage of Turkish aristocrats, took up his residence and administered business at the seraglio, outside the ramparts, at a place called Qanawat (the canals), near the Roman aqueduct.

In the same neighbourhood were erected the two great imperial madrasahs, the Solaymaniya (1554), constructed by the famous Turkish architect, Sinan, who built the Sulaymaniya in Constantinople, and the Salimiya (1566), designed by a Persian architect. With their great buttressed domes, surrounded by a double row of small domes covering the porticoes and rooms, their slender pencil-like minarets tapering to a cone, and the surrounding gardens with their fountains, trees and flowers, they achieve an architectural unity and a highly characteristic atmosphere of their own, in a style native to Constantinople and readily transplanted to Damascus.

The Solaymaniya has a rich variety of architectural and decorative motifs, characteristic of that period and style, such as marble inlaid work and great overlays of faience tiles on the walls and tympana of the doors and windows; keel arches with alternate black and white arch-stones; abundant use of stalactites, niches ornamented with overlapping shell designs, lintels with many-coloured interlocking voussoirs, forming increasingly ornate and complicated patterns. The capitals

16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MD1 Syria MD
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361 consist of clustered tetrahedrons, coloured with blue and red.
346 The astragals of the columns and their tori are of gilt bronze.
172 All the surfaces are composed of alternating courses of different colours.

The same features are to be seen in the buildings put up by the governor, Dervish-Pasha, forming a fine group at the beginning of the Pilgrims' Way, to the west of the old town. The façade of the "Ed-Derwichiyeh" Mosque is composed of alternate black and white courses; the tall polygonal minaret is painted green. The whole building, which is surmounted by a large dome encircled by small cupolas, is architecturally connected with the neighbouring mausoleum by an archway over the road. The arrangement of designs, shapes and colours on the façades shows extraordinary imaginative ingenuity. The pointed bulbous dome of the mausoleum rests on a drum of irregular shape. At a later date, in the same street, but a little further south, Sinan-Pasha built his mosque among the suqs of Bab Jabiya; it has the same characteristics and features (minaret faced with green faience tiles, large dome, inflected arches, geometrical capitals, etc.); above all, it makes the same spectacular impression in the street surrounding, inevitably catching the eye between the suqs and the Mecca road.

361 Within the confines of the old town, between the Great
342 Mosque and the "Street called Straight", a number of khans
172 and two new hammams were built at this period.

Dervish-Pasha built the "Khan Al-Harir", which is a curious mixture of Syrian and Turkish architectural styles. It is a fine structure, with porticoes surrounding the courtyard and, on the upper floor, two series of rooms connected by a corridor and covered by a triple row of domes.

The Khan Al-Gumrok, in the same locality, has a covered hall instead of a central courtyard, and six large domes supported on pendentives. The Khan Soleyman-Pasha (1732), following a similar but more complicated plan, has a courtyard covered by two large domes. Here, the composition is conceived on broader lines and the architectural volumes are enormous, while the dual colour scheme is still found, not only in the black and white courses of the walls, but also in the bonding of the voussoirs of the arcades and pendentives. Some years later, Asad-Pasha, who was Vali (governor) of Damascus and led the great pilgrimage for 14 years running, built a new khan, and a house for himself between it and the Great Mosque.

The khan has a façade reminiscent of Venetian Renaissance architecture in composition, while the building technique and the choice of decorative motifs and materials are in the best artistic traditions of northern Syria. Asad-Pasha's residence ("Azem Palace", 1749) has the same features, repeated and multiplied; it follows the traditional plan of all large Syrian dwellings, with its two entirely separate groups of rooms (selamlik [men's quarters] and haremlik [women's quarters]), its courtyards, porticoes, iwans, pools and fountains.

Thus Damascus today, as in the earliest periods of its history, is still assimilating and using artistic and cultural themes, borne along the great traffic routes, to converge upon the oasis between the Anti-Lebanon and the desert.

PRESENTATION OF MONUMENTS

361 In studying the growth of Damascus and its various districts,
172 we have tried to bring out the character and functions of certain groups of buildings which, if skilfully restored and arranged,

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The suqs with their khans, the hammams, mosques and madrasahs generally form a coherent and harmonious architectural and functional unit, which should be kept intact. The present system of classifying monuments should be extended to cover architectural groups as well as individual buildings. We would repeat that this does not mean thwarting reasonable attempts to improve or develop a district. Our aim is merely to show that the usual criteria, methods and means employed in the technical departments of municipalities, where individual interests and immediate advantages are alone considered, should not be applied to such architectural groups. It should have been possible, for example, to prevent the erection of a conspicuously tasteless modern house, jarring in both colour and design, close to the southern façade of the Zahiriya Madrasah (National Library). The new buildings in Seleymani Street, near the Khan Al-Gumrok are another instance of the sort of thing that should not be allowed. Before putting up new building in old parts of the town, much thought should be given to their appearance and colour, with the twofold aim of improving the present situation and setting off the monuments, which are dignified and beautiful features of the city as a whole, to their best advantage. The criterion of utility cannot be ruthlessly applied to the products of culture and the mind. For that reason our young town planners should give up their attempts to recover money spent on laying out an open square with streets radiating from it or piercing wide streets, by ill-considered exploitation of building land in old parts of the town, where the present houses give very little return or by the demolition of hammams, madrasahs and gardens, which now bring in no revenue at all, in order to free their sites. 361 172

The old centre of the town would gain greatly, both aesthetically and from the practical point of view, if the Citadel were arranged and used for a different purpose. Its interest as a monument is obvious, with its magnificent façades and towers and the beautiful east gate with its alveolate decoration. At the present time, the Citadel buildings are put to poor use as a barracks and prison. Should it be decided to use them for a different purpose, the open spaces within the walls should be used for public gardens and so brought into the life of the city. They might be some of the most beautiful gardens in Damascus, with gateways leading into the streets outside. An enterprising architect, with the help of an expert advisory committee, could well adapt the fine and imposing architecture of the Citadel to meet the needs of some public institution. It might, for example, be used to house a university faculty, with a "Students' Centre", providing accommodation for students and professors not resident in Damascus, a library, studies, lecture-rooms and exhibition halls. The mosque should again be used for prayer. Premises could also be provided for recreation and entertainment, with a cinema, café, restaurant, etc. If the western façade were cleared, there would be a really splendid and imposing view down the wide An-Nassr Avenue. Thus transformed, the Citadel, instead of hindering the town's development as it does today, would once again become a part of public life and, in its new guise, would be a great social asset to the city and the nation.

The Great Omayyad Mosque is the most interesting monument in Damascus, although unfortunately it has been so seriously damaged in the course of its history by destruction, earthquakes and fire that it is now a somewhat confused mixture of unequal artistic and architectural styles. It would be excellent if sufficient funds could be found to complete and extend the work—already happily begun by the Wakfs and the Directorate of Antiquities—of restoring this monument and setting 346 172

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172

it off to better advantage, so as to enhance its appearance, as its artistic and historical interest, its position as the religious centre of the Syrian capital, deserve.

As it now stands, the older parts (mosaics, columns, stucco work, mihrabs, qubbet, etc.) look lifeless and unattached, as though they were no longer part of the mosque, but rather, in some respects, an encumbrance. The aim of the restoration plan should be to set off this heritage of art and history to the best advantage. The first step must be a careful, critical assessment of the relative value of the different features. Steps must also be taken to make an entity of the buildings and restore their artistic unity. This difficult and complicated task calls for the collaboration of artists and scholars, but the result, if the necessary care is exercised, will be to restore to the city the full splendour of its greatest religious edifice.

We give below for purposes of guidance only a provisional list, based on our first impressions, of the things to be borne in mind when drawing up a plan for restoration and renovation work. The most interesting from the historical point of view are obviously the oldest parts: columns, capitals, cornices, inscriptions, fragments of walls and arcades, etc. These are precious relics of a dead civilization, to be preserved for their documentary and cultural interest. As ruins and fragments, they also have a decorative value, and there can be no justification for restoration which involves their wholesale reconstruction.

All the surviving parts of the original Omayyad building (arcades and capitals, mosaics) are likewise of outstanding historical and archaeological interest; but the question of how to set them off most effectively is here complicated by the fact that they are also component parts of the present building. They are, moreover, of very considerable aesthetic value.

The interior of the prayer-hall, in the central part of the transept, bears traces of the succession of periods, restorations and reconstructions through which it has passed. This is now no longer the centre of interest; it gives rather the impression of a sort of corridor separating the two wings of the naves. The dirty, defaced remains of mosaics on the north wall form dark patches against the white background. A few fine old windows are interspersed with a large number of very ordinary modern ones, with garish coloured glass. The thick marble with which the four central pillars are faced for reinforcement is of no interest. The same aesthetic defects and lack of stylistic unity are to be found on the south wall; the mihrab, with its delicate inlaid work, the Koranic inscriptions in faience, the three finely designed lower windows and the beautiful gilded ceiling, clash with the style of the rest.

We think that the white plaster on the walls, the arcades and the drum of the dome, in this part of the transept, should be removed in order fully to reveal the stone structure beneath. The dressed stone in the naves on either side is already visible. The next stage might be to replace the upper windows, change the colour of the ceiling beams, and instal a new lighting system, dispensing with the lamps at present in use. Syria today has plenty of talented artists and craftsmen; and to give them employment would help to keep alive a glorious tradition, and to encourage crafts which are in danger of being stifled by the advance of mechanization.

The comments made on the sanctuary apply equally to the courtyard, vestibule and doorways. Many unmeaning and uninteresting features, such as the glass-paned doors and modern eaves, the neo-classical marble facings, and the cement slabs forming part of the portico floor, are found side by side with

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361 the main centre of the Jebel Zawiyé, was both an agricultural
172 and an industrial town (large-scale production of oil and wine), and finally covered an area about 2 miles long by 1 1/2 wide. Among the confused heaps of its ruins, the remains of several churches and rich mausolea of the sixth century, with their pyramidal crowns, are recognizable.

172 G. Tchalenko has drawn attention to the similarity of the
341 architecture throughout the limestone plateaux due to the use of the same materials and the same methods of hewing and bonding stone. He has also noted the unity and homogeneity of the carved ornamentation, which was gradually adapted to the new forms of the various buildings. This suggests that itinerant groups of craftsmen went from place to place, taking their style and methods with them.

172 Evidence is provided by ecclesiastic buildings, varying in
346 nature and importance. We would draw particular attention to two of them, which seem to surpass all the others by their quality and exceptional charm. The first is the cruciform basilica of St. Simeon (Qalaat Semaan) built in the third quarter of the fifth century around the column on which the Stylite spent the last 37 years of his life and which, long after his death, was still a famous place of pilgrimage. The originality of the plan, the masterly structure of the central octagon, with its great semi-circular arches, the harmonious proportions of the chevet and the southern façade, together with the neighbouring baptistery and conventual buildings, make this peerless architectural group "the greatest and grandest Christian ruin in the East". The second of these monuments, lesser known because it is difficult of access, is the basilica of Qalblouz, standing in a temenos, like an ancient temple, on the crest of the Jebel el-Ala. It dates from the end of the fifth century. Its façade flanked by towers, its chevet adorned with columns, the great arches separating the nave from the side aisles, the majestic proportions of the apse, and the quality and sober arrangement of carving, produce that impression of harmony and perfection that only a masterpiece can achieve.

THE POPULATION OF THE LIMESTONE PLATEAU

361 The profusion of ruins over such a large area, not only in the
172 vicinity of fertile plains, but on rocky and waterless plateaux shows that there was once a large population, which later disappeared completely. The construction of water tanks may have helped the people to subsist, but that alone cannot explain their extraordinary prosperity. What, then, were their means of livelihood?

Some have thought the answer to this question to be that the arable land disappeared as a result of complete and unchecked deforestation, which brought about a radical change in the conditions of life. Tchalenko does not agree; in the work already referred to, he gives a simpler and more plausible explanation of this phenomenon.

It has long been established that the ancient inhabitants of the limestone plateau owed their prosperity to the cultivation of the olive and, to a lesser degree, of the vine. The many presses found in all the settlements are proof of this. The cultivation of these crops is perfectly feasible in the soil and climate of the present day. It was a change in political and social circumstances which brought about the decline in the population. Where the soil accumulated in rocky basins and

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that they are widely scattered and often difficult of access, make it hard to ensure really effective protection. 361 172

THE CHURCHES OF EZRAA

At least a brief mention must be made of the importance of Ezraa. The churches of St. George and St. Hélie, dating from 514 and 542 respectively, are important in the history of early Christian art. Today, they are in a deplorable state of neglect. The cupola of the church of St. George collapsed in 1912. Ugly repairs have been made to both. The consolidation and intelligent restoration of both these buildings is particularly to be recommended. 346

BOSRA

The old capital of the Roman Province of Arabia is now a humble village. It contains remarkable ancient ruins, both Christian and Islamic, whose architectural beauty and historical importance recall the city's long and brilliant past. 361 172

The topography of the Roman town is still clearly indicated by the straight course of the main thoroughfare, built on the ancient decumanus; several columns of its porticos and one of the gates at the western end of the town are still standing. The visitor will note a great monumental arch with three bays, the ruins of thermae and four large Corinthian columns which may have formed part of a nymphaeum.

Built in 513 under the Archbishop Julianos, the cathedral, now in a very ruinous state, is one of the oldest examples of a large church with a cupola and central plan. From an inscription, we know that Bosra possessed an even older church, dedicated to the Virgin in the third quarter of the fourth century by the Archbishop Antipater; this inscription reminds us of the important part played by the town in early Christian history. Its name is also linked with the early history of Islam, for a large building with an apse and a blind façade is believed to be the remains of the monastery where the monk Bahira taught Mahomet and foretold his prophetic calling. A mosque, Al-Mabrak, was later built on the spot where, according to tradition, the Prophet's camel knelt. 346 172

This is one of the many mosques whose high dark minarets, square-built in the twelfth century, give the town of Bosra its own particular stamp. Although the Great Mosque of Omar is in a better state of preservation and although the minaret of Al-Fatmé has a slenderer grace, the Al-Mabrak mosque and the adjoining madrassh, built in 1136—the oldest Syrian madrassh, according to J. Sauvaget—form a very remarkable architectural group.

The rapid decay of these monuments is most regrettable. A glance at the older publications will show the extent of the damage, which has been made worse by the building of modern

houses among the ancient buildings. These houses should be removed and the monuments should be consolidated and restored. It is not at all certain that the plan adopted by the authorities for the improvement of this site meets all these needs or gives sufficient attention to the appropriate presentation of the principal monuments.

In conclusion, we must draw attention to the quite outstanding interest of the group formed by the Roman theatre and the Arab citadel. The two buildings, equal in beauty, are intimately connected. The thirteenth-century ramparts, with their great square towers and rustic work, encircle the crown of the theatre, while a building intended as a storehouse, consisting of three storeys of great vaulted rooms, one above the other, has been built on the orchestra. The Directorate of Antiquities has recently carried out large-scale excavation work to clear the tiered seats and the stage as far as possible. We feel that bolder action is necessary and that the huge block of masonry obstructing the interior of the caves, which is of no great interest in itself, should be demolished. This would restore a splendid ancient monument in its entirety, without serious detriment to the Moslem citadel. The Roman theatre at Bosra is one of the largest, most beautiful and most complete of those that still remain. Moreover, it has a number of noteworthy features, in the structure of the sloping arches supporting the tiers, the arrangement of the small stairways leading to the latter, and the wonderful ornamentation of the *frons scenae*. The towers of the Arab citadel are also a magnificent example of medieval military architecture. If the work we have suggested were done, both buildings, instead of detracting from each other as they do at present, would be seen to greater advantage. Together, they would be an outstanding attraction for tourists.

The region of Bosra and the Jebel Druse, which can be reached quite easily from Damascus, should be much better known. The establishment of a rest-house inside the citadel of Bosra itself and the improvement of accommodation facilities at Sueida would involve little cost and make visits much easier.

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p. 33B

1/A [AT BOSRA -- ANALYST]

16: Collart et al G-5 (1953) 1954 MD: Syria MD1

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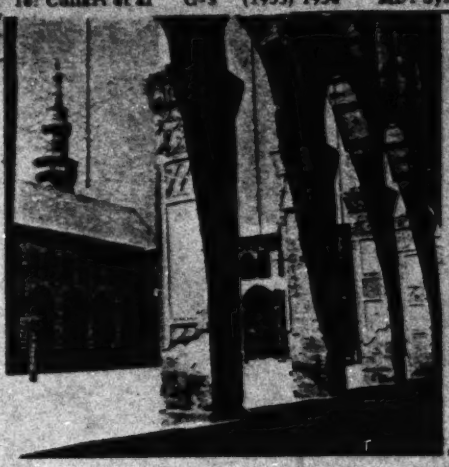

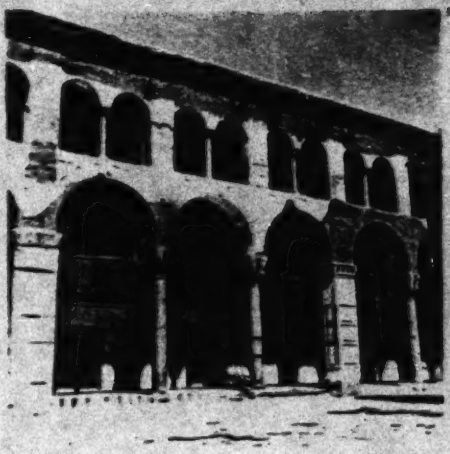

1. Damascus. Great Mosque; North portico.
2. Damascus. Great Mosque; West portico.
3. Damascus. Great Mosque; West portico and mosaics.
4. Damascus. Great Mosque; mosaics.
5. Damascus. Great Mosque; mosaics.

following P. 35-A

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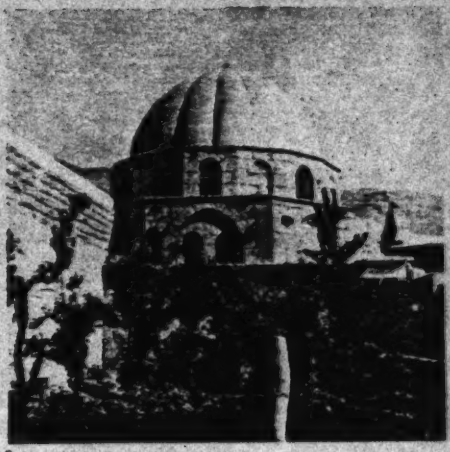

6. Damascus. Cemetery of Bab Saghir.
7. Damascus. Darvish-Pasha Mosque (1571).
8. Damascus. Sahnaiya Madrasah (1469).
9. Damascus. Rukniya Madrasah (1324).

following p. 35-B

10. Damascus Sulaymaniya Madrasah (1134).
11. Damascus Salihiya Madrasah (1168).
12. Damascus Khan Asad-Pasha (18th century).
13. Damascus Adiliyya Madrasah (1556).

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16. Damascus. Nouriyeh Mosque ("Flamboyant"; 1001-13); minaret.
17. Damascus. Sheikh Nimiby ad-Din (1318); minaret.
18. Damascus. Al-Nouriyeh Mosque; minaret.
19. Damascus. Yalbugh Mosque (1360); minaret.
20. Damascus. Madrasa al-Jaqmaqiyeh (1479); minaret.
21. Damascus. Jami Jubun (16th century); minaret.

following P.35-D

34J
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following P. 36-E

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21 26

21. Aleppo. El-Omari Mosque.
24. Aleppo. Mariam Anjum.
25. Aleppo. Archbishop House.
26. Aleppo. Khan Frederic.

following P 35-F

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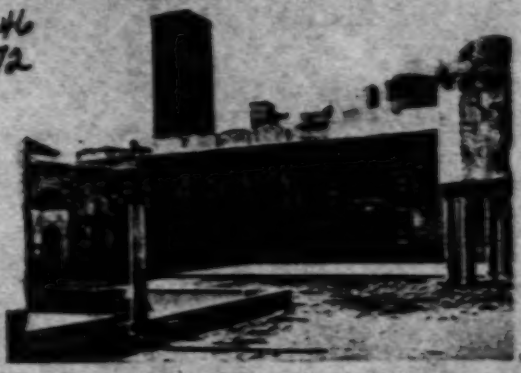

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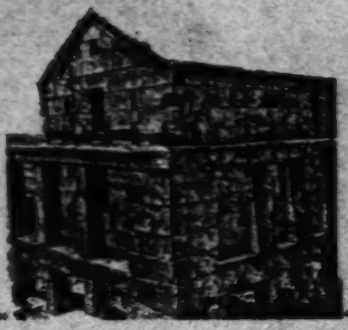

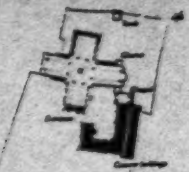

CALʿAT SIMʿĀN

following P 35 - L

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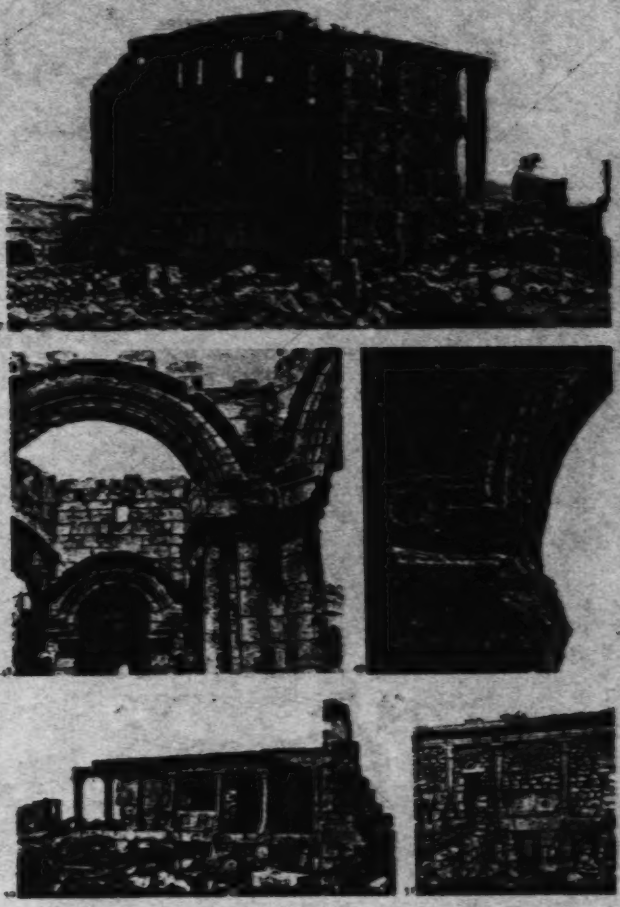

Dura Europos, Hauran
St. Simeon Stylites. General viewpoint.
Qalb'ain. Dimensions of the church.
Bakirh. Portion of a house (1938).
Bakirh. The same in 1953.

following 25 - M

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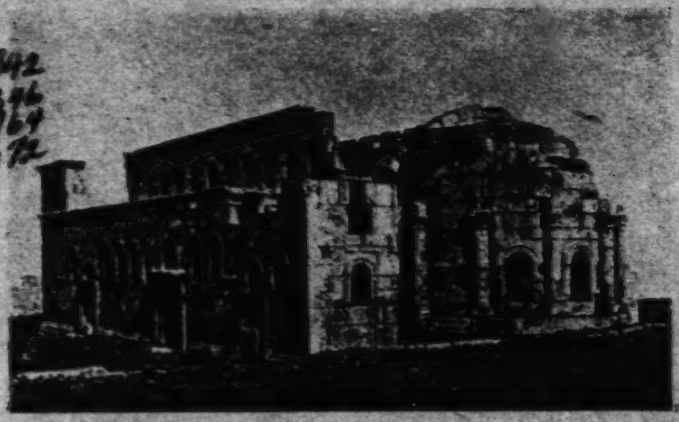

13. Qalb
14. El-Bara

following p. 35 - N

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a. Baalbek. Acropolis entrance.
b. Qasr-ibn. Temple of Hadad.
c. Qalaat. Gate of the Palace.
d. Kasr. Church of St. George.

following P35 - P

SYRIA MDI

46.31 Southwest and Adjacent S, G-3 (1945-1949) 1949 Int Middle East

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Above: Teacher (at right) and part of the top class of the primary school for girls, Sarrapha, Syria
Below: A former French army barracks now used for a government school for boys, Sarrapha

following P. 360 (B)

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-3 (1945-1946)1949 Ml Middle East
SYRIA MDI

875*

Type of School	Number of Schools
Schools with one teacher	345
Schools with two teachers	90
Schools with three teachers	40
Schools with four teachers	17
Schools with five teachers	42
Schools with six teachers	38
Schools with seven teachers	24
Schools with eight teachers	16
Schools with nine teachers	10
Schools with ten teachers	6
Schools with more than ten teachers	30
Total	658

More than half of the schools (52.4 percent) are one-teacher schools, while the number of schools with a full complement of teachers (five or more) is 166, or 25.2 percent.

Light may also be shed upon primary education by an examination of the qualifications of primary-school teachers. The following data are for 1943–44:[4]

Qualification	Number of Teachers
Graduates of teachers colleges or holders of teaching diploma	820
Law College graduates	10
Agricultural School (Salamiyah)	13
Higher School of Literature	18
Baccalauréat, Second Part	93
Baccalauréat, First Part	225
Brevet (General, Technical, or Commercial)	159
Total	1,338

As the number of teachers was 1,856 in 1943, this leaves 518 teachers unaccounted for, presumably because their qualifications were even lower than the *brevet* (roughly equivalent to a junior-high-school certificate).

Buildings and Equipment

872*
346

A large number of primary schools, particularly in the cities, are in rented buildings. Most of these are houses built to accommodate families, although some of the old-style houses are spacious and have large courtyards. Ordinarily the rooms planned as lodging quarters are too small for

[4] Sati' al-Husri, *Reports on the State of Education in Syria and Recommendations for Its Reform* (Damascus: 1944), p. 132.

44:Matthews and Akrawi S, G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
SYRIA MDI

K872
•346

a class of thirty or forty, and classes either become crowded or have to be adjusted to the rooms. Rented buildings range from the large houses that may be found in Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, to the small village houses which are little more than huts. Primary-school buildings may be owned by the government, but the number of these is comparatively small. Many schools in cities and in villages are owned by municipalities or are rented by the municipalities as their contribution to the maintenance of the schools. Sanitary conditions, lighting, and ventilation may be fair in government-owned buildings and in some of the rented ones, but they are often inadequate.

K872

The usual classroom desk is built with seats attached to accommodate two children, and is frequently a local product. The seats may or may not have backs, and in the latter case the children rest their backs either against the wall or against the desk immediately behind them. In a crowded school a desk for two may be occupied by three or even four pupils. The desks are in various degrees of preservation, some being new, while others appear to have been in use a long time.

Some of the larger primary schools in the cities are well stocked with instructional materials and equipment such as maps in French or Arabic, natural-history charts imported from Egypt, story pictures. In some schools there is a variety of instructional materials made by the teachers. The village schools are not so well supplied.

Libraries, when they exist, are very small and little used by the children. Very little money is given by the Ministry of Education for the purchase of library books. Occasionally books are sent to the schools by the Ministry.

The schools are run on the most economical lines. Very little money is allowed for the everyday running of the schools. The principal or head teacher has to spend out of his own pocket or borrow from the welfare society's fund. Only after receipts for the expenditure are presented and approved by higher authority is the money refunded by the Treasury.

Secondary Education

K873

As has already been stated, secondary education was shortened from seven to six years under the new plan of organization. In the earlier course the first four years led to the examination for the *brevet* certificate, and were followed by two years in the scientific or literary section, which ended in the first *baccalauréat* examination. The new plan calls simply for an intermediate stage of four years leading to the intermediate examination, and a preparatory stage of two years divided into a scientific and a literary

44:Matthews and Akrawi S,G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
SYRIA MDI

*873 While there were 2,467 students in the first year, there were only 301 in the seventh year. Most classes have between 30 and 40 pupils, but classes with as low as 11 students and as high as 70 students were seen by the American Council Commission. Crowded classes, however, are rare in the secondary schools.

Attendance is quite regular, but it tends to drop sharply toward the end of the year, the students preferring to prepare for their final examinations at home.

School activities are on the whole encouraged, although schools differ in this respect. In addition to the regular athletic classes and the compulsory *Futuwah* (military training), schools engage in a number of organized games, mainly football, basketball, volleyball, and in some cases tennis. A number of schools have Scout troops. School groups also conduct picnics and excursions. Student clubs are more numerous in larger schools than in the smaller ones. The most common is the cooperative welfare society, which gathers contributions from students, teachers, and occasionally from the general public, for the help of poorer students. There are also clubs for Arabic, music, dramatics, and other such activities. Some schools and their clubs issue student magazines. The teachers usually play a leading role in these activities, serving as sponsors and in some schools as chairmen.

Perhaps a word regarding the opportunities open to the secondary-school graduate will be in order. In Syria proper a graduate may go to the Syrian University or to the two-year course in teacher training. The latter is the course most of the girls follow. However, a number of opportunities exist outside Syria where the second *baccalauréat* was considered to be of a high standard. Previously it was accepted in France and students holding it were permitted to enter French higher institutions. Whether the new certificate, with one less year of schooling, will be considered of the same level remains to be seen, although it is hardly likely under the circumstances. Both the American University and the Université St. Joseph in Beirut accepted it; the former required an examination in English but admitted students to the sophomore and even to the junior year. The latter accepted it for the purposes of entrance to its Faculties of Medicine, Law, and Engineering. The Egyptian Ministry of Education also recognized it for entrance to the Universities of Fuad I and Faruq I and other higher institutions.

Buildings and Equipment

*873 Secondary schools are more fortunate than primary schools with regard ● 346 to their buildings. The boys schools are usually more favored as to build-

44:Matthews and Akrawi S,G-3 (1945-1946)1949 MI Middle East
Syria MDI

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ings than are the girls schools. Of 14 secondary schools visited by the American Council Commission, 7 were government-owned, including 2 confiscated French barracks at Suwayda in Jabal Druze; 2 belonged to local municipalities; and 5 were rented. Undoubtedly, the best secondary-school buildings seen by the Commission in Syria were those of the Damascus and Aleppo boys schools. A fine new building for the boys secondary school at Homs was in the process of construction.

873*

In libraries, also, the secondary schools are more favored. There is a wide range, however, in the number of books—from about 25 or 30 books in the library of the intermediate school for boys at Suwayda to about 7,000 volumes in the library of the secondary school for boys in Damascus. The books are almost entirely in French and Arabic. Large collections of French literary works and French textbooks exist at both Damascus and Aleppo boys schools. A number of Arabic magazines are subscribed to, and formerly a number of French magazines as well. The British Council recently gave small collections of English books to the libraries of some of the schools. The Damascus school for boys has a full-time librarian. Usually there is little space for reading in the libraries, and students borrow books at specified times, sometimes paying deposits for the books borrowed. More freedom in the system of borrowing, more space for reading in the libraries, and more encouragement by teachers and all concerned seem to be necessary for making the school library play a more important part in the educational programs of the schools.

The situation with regard to desks and furniture is much the same as that in primary school except that the quality of the desks is better, and few, if any, desks accommodate more than two pupils.

Vocational Schools

874*

There were 6 public vocational schools in Syria at the time of the visit of the American Council Commission: the Technical (trade) School for boys, the Technical School for girls, and the Commercial School for boys, all in Damascus; the Technical School for boys, and the Commercial School for boys, both in Aleppo, and the Agricultural School at Salamiyah, east of Hama. The last named is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Economy. Four of the six schools were visited by the Commission —the Technical School for boys and the Commercial School for boys at Damascus were not visited.

All of the vocational schools (except the school of agriculture) give a course of four years above the primary-school certificate. Formerly they

SYRIA MDI
44:Matthews and Akrawi S,G-3 (1945-1946)1949 Mi Middle East
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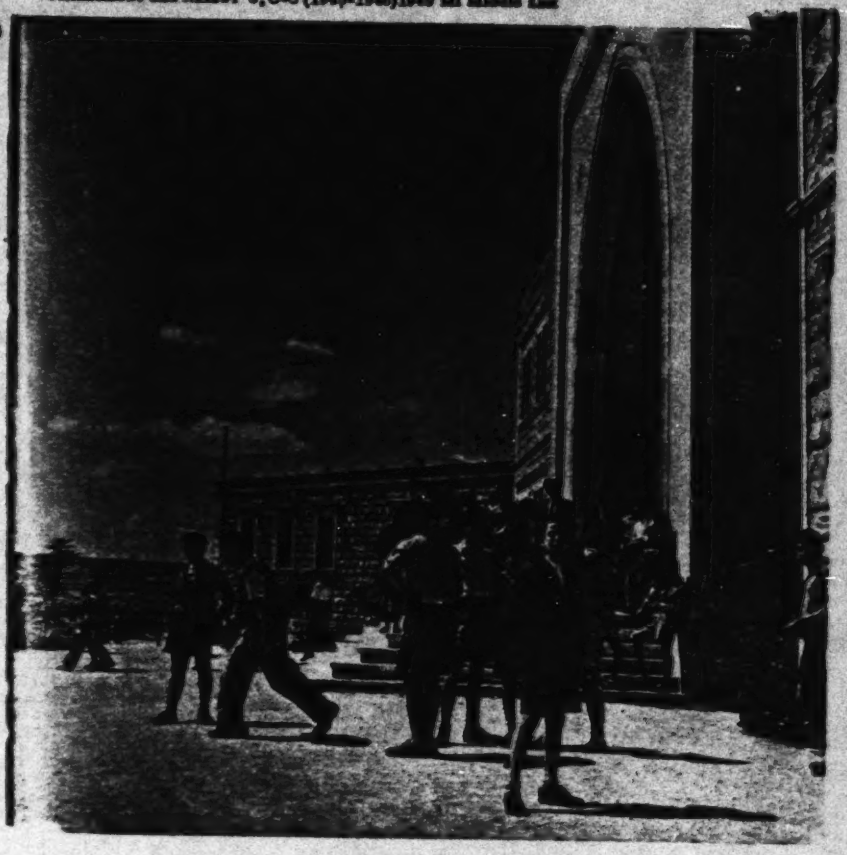

ALEPPO COLLEGE, ALEPPO, SYRIA
This view shows the Arabic arched façade of the main classroom building

following p. 392 (a)

SYRIA MDI

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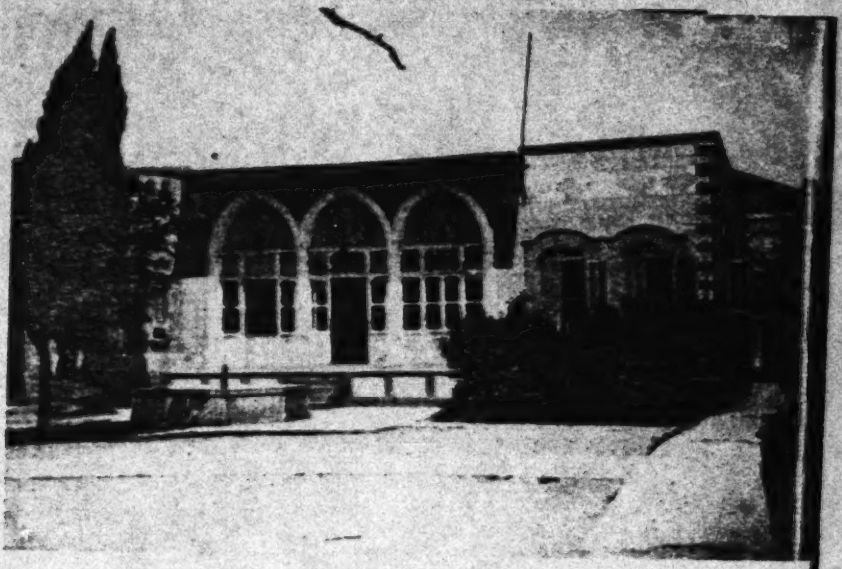

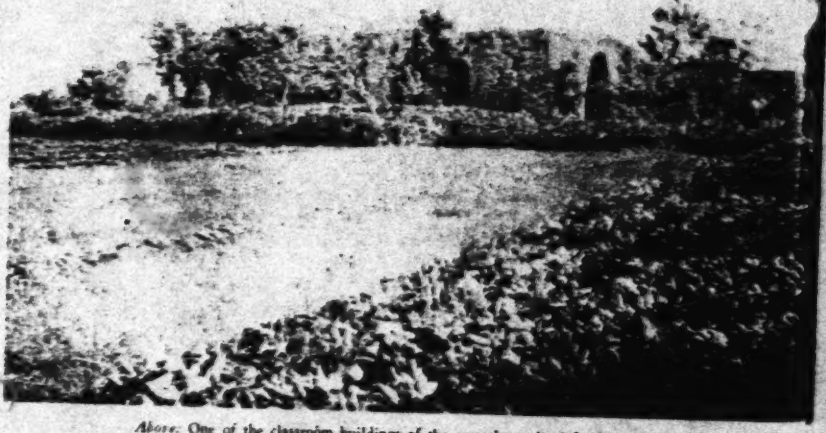

Above: One of the classroom buildings of the secondary school for boys, Homs, Syria
Below: A village primary school with a school garden, near Homs

Following p. 392 (B)